

No. 22.

A free Flowing of the Father's Love to the Heirs of the Kingdom, with all that are seeking the Peace and Righteousness of it.

YE little Flock of the Heavenly Power, who are raised unto newness of Life by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ the Righteous, in whom ye have obtained Grace and Mercy with God the Father, and have the full assurance of Life eternal sealed unto you by his holy Spirit, whereby ye feel all things added for your consolation & rejoicing; so that outward Persecution or Tribulation cannot separate you from the Love of God which ye possess in Christ Jesus the Lord, but in his Love you are so rooted and grounded, and steadfastly stayed and fixed, as that the Powers of darkness cannot move or shake you to pluck you up; ye are the glorious Offspring of Almighty God, and the shadow of his Power is over your branches for your preservation, in which I ye down in stillness and quietness, for the Lord God worketh mightily for you.

Dear Brethren, the deep sense of that Endless Love which God the Father hath bestowed upon us through Christ Jesus, doth mightily abound in my heart towards you, and in all brotherly kindness I therein visit you, as being a partaker of the Afflictions and Sufferings which any of you endure this day; for I do assuredly believe that God is with you, and that his Love doth freely abound in you over the Afflictions that do betide you, and in this Faith I am comforted, knowing that the Arm of the Lord is underneath you to support and succour you; the sense of which constrains me to visit you with these lines, that ye may be strengthened unto all long-suffering and patience with joyfulness, holding forth the holy Testimony of Life in full assurance of Faith unto the end; for you are an unknown People in the hidden life of the immortal Seed, and therefore it is that you endure grief by aliens and strangers, who are not of the same household of Faith with you; and do not marvel why these things come to pass, it being no more than what he endured before you, who is the Captain of your Salvation; for had they known him, they would not have crucified him; and you being born of his Life, you are as far out of the sight and knowledge of every stranger, as he was, who by wicked hands was crucified: and this is not a new thing which happeneth unto you, but is the same that he endured, who is leading you in his own footsteps, that ye may obtain the Inheritance with him: and this day is not come upon you unawares, that you should be amazed at the approach of it, or affrighted at the terror in it; for the Lord God hath been preparing you for it, and furnishing you with strength to stand with boldness in it, so that ye are as armed men well prepared for the battle, being filled with might by his Spirit in your inner man, and your backs are as ready for the Smiter as the Smiter is to smite you, and you shrink not their blows though they be many and furious, but stand with the Helmer of Salvation over your heads, and feel your safety in the Arm of your Keeper; for assuredly the mighty Lord God, who is the God of your Salvation, doth arise in his Power, and according to your Afflictions so doth he proportion his Strength for your Preservation; and though the wicked be permitted to do something of what is in their hearts, yet God will restrain them for accomplishing their fury to the full, and they shall never be able to bring it to pass though they have decreed it; for when so much of their wrath is gone forth as shall turn to the praise of God, then will he restrain the remainder, by pleading the Cause of his Chosen, and appearing in his Power for the Deliverance of Sion, and all his enemies shall stand amazed and confounded within themselves, for the day of trembling shall come upon all flesh, and then shall your Glory shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of the Father, and many shall take hold on your skirts, with a desire to be called by your Name; and from that day shall Israel possess their own Land in peace, and quietly sit under their own Vine and Fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid; then will the Lord comfort you for the years wherein you have been afflicted, and for the dayes wherein you have seen adversity: Therefore ye little Flock of the heavenly power, be not afraid nor terrified because of your Adversaries, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom; and though you endure many Tribulations, yet through the same you draw nearer the Inheritance; and you that endure Tribulations in patience, you have a good part in the Joy of the Kingdom; and herein is your Comfort in the midst of Tribulation, feeling a possession which the world cannot give, nor take away, in which stand ye steadfast without wavering, and never look back again to fading things, but still press forward in the Drawings and Overcomings of the Heavenly Love, that the Eternal Life may wrap you up in it self, and mould you into the nature of its own being: for dear Lambs, I know the manifold temptations that may assault you in such a day of trial; and I also know the manifold Mercies of the Lord God to overcome them; and as ye cleave to the Lord, and resign up all into his Will, the appearance of his Power will scatter Temptations and drive them away; but if you begin to listen to the Enemy, and to enter into thoughts and reasonings about the things of this life, then a Vail will come over you, and weakness will seize upon you, and your dayes and nights will be wearisome to you: therefore, my dear Friends, keep your Consciences clear in the sight of God, that as the streams of his living water hath purged out that which once did defile you, even so to keep your selves unspotted

of the world; for you are to give up all in the freeness of your minds, and the Lord loveth a cheerful giver; and where all is given up in cheerfulness, his Love doth answer the Givers seven-fold into their bosoms: for you give him nothing but his own, and why should any murmur when he requires it, or keep back any part when he calls for the whole? O give all up freely and cheerfully, and his gifts will be enlarged unto you more abundantly, and you will feel his strength to carry you in pure delightings to do his Will, and to follow him whithersoever he goes. I know that many of you are in the true sense of it, and have your Rejoicing in it; and though you endure a great fight of Afflictions, and go through Tryals and hard Tribulations, yet you cannot say much of them to glory in them, or any way seek to be esteemed or set up by them, but you secretly rejoice in God, whose Presence you feel to be your strength, and so return him the Glory in his own strength, by which you are preserved to do his Will: and I know there are many that cannot express much in words, that are freely given up to serve the Lord, whose Offerings in their breathings are acceptable with him; and I also know, that many are truly seeking the Peace and Righteousness of the Kingdom, that yet are sore beset with divers temptations, and are not grown into that strength as to be able to resist them, but secretly cry unto the Lord that he would help them, and by his Power to sever all from them that letteth or hindereth from following of him.

O ye dear Brethren, who stand in the strength of the Eternal Power, be ye tender over the weak and crying Babe, and help it forward with an Arm of Love; for there can be no more expected than there is strength to perform, but as there is a willingness begotten, and a true seeking after the Peace and Righteousness of the Kingdom, the willing mind is accepted according to what it hath, and God will encrease strength to the willingness, and in due time make it able to perform: therefore let the strong bear with it as a Babe that is willing to the utmost of its strength; and if through its weakness it should at any time fall, be ready to help it up again; leave it not behind you because it is weak, but take it on with you though it walk slowly; for it is an Heir of the Kingdom, though many things yet lie in its way and it want strength to remove them and get over them; O condescend to it in bowels of tenderness; and if it slip, hold it up and heal it; and do not beat it, but take it by the hand and lead it, until it have received strength to walk with you that are strong; and so in the Eternal Unity and Fellowship of the Kingdom you will be all knit together as one man; and truly serve one another in every office of Love, which is good and well-pleasing in the sight of God.

So all dear Friends every where, whether bond or free, feel your Unity in the Spirit and Bond of Peace, and then you that yet have your outward liberty will help to bear the burdens of your Brethren that are in Afflictions; for all that are in the Life they are in a sensible feeling of the Sufferings of the Body, and it is unto them as their own in the Unity of the Spirit; for the Spirit gives the sense of the Afflictions and Sufferings of Brethren, and also of their Joy and Consolation; and here the true Love aboundeth one towards another, which the Waters cannot quench, nor the Floods drown: therefore as the Lord God hath chosen you to be a People to himself, so do you walk worthy of his kindness, and honour his Name and Truth in the blessed Unity of the Immortal Seed; for many eyes are upon you, and many that watch for evil and not for good, whose tongues are as ready to accuse as their eyes are to watch; and there are also many that have a true love and favour in their hearts towards you, and a secret cry in them to be with you; and when the Cloud dissolveth which at present lies over them, they will run: therefore walk circumspectly in the Light, and preach to all in the Life, that you may be a sweet savour unto Life in all, even as I know many of you are, in whom the Virtues of Life do sweetly abound, which is a sure Testimony for God in the hearts of all people; and so all feel the Springs of Life to your Refreshment and Comfort; for the Lord hath great regard unto you, and his Promise doth assure a great Deliverance for you; for thus he hath spoken, *Jacob shall not always be in trouble, nor Sion in heaviness; for I will glorify my Name in Sion, and Jacob shall rejoice*: Therefore be of good comfort ye dear Children, and think not the time long, but let Patience have its perfect work, and in the living Faith and Hope stand ye steadfast, and anchor into the depths of God's Eternal Love, so will you be stayed upon him, and strengthened by him, and no weariness will come upon you, but a fresh delighting in the Seed which over all must reign, and as Heirs of the Kingdom inherit your portion to the glory of the Father, where I dearly imbrace you, and in pure Love and perfect Peace salute you all.

Your dear Brother in bonds, W. S.

The beginning of the 7th month, 1664.

This is to go amongst Friends, and to be read in their Meetings.